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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the experiences and findings of five New York City public school teachers who, in the course of research for their master's degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) designed and implemented individual action research projects investigating issues and concerns emanating from their classroom experiences. It is hoped that new insights into language teachers knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes will be uncovered that can be used to design more effective, useful, and holistic graduate TESOL education. The principal research question is: What was the nature of the experiences of bilingual teachers performing action research for the first time in a graduate TESOL program? This question was then divided into three sub-questions: (a) What topics did the teachers choose, what were their motivations for choosing them, and what findings did they produce? (b) What courses of action did they propose for working with English language learners upon completion of research? (c) What problems and successes did they encounter? There are three general recommendations and findings: (1) Identify and explore affective factors such as empathy in TESOL teachers' experiences that link research to practice. (2) Advocate for greater inclusion of teachers' voiced in educational research. (3) Raise awareness of action research among TESOL teachers. Data-rich tables and an appendix are included. 35 references. (KFT)

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Introduction

In 1999, a cohort of in-service teachers, who were completing their last year of study for a Masters degree in TESOL, designed and implemented individual action research projects which investigated issues and concerns emanating from their experiences in public school classrooms in New York City. This paper reports upon the experiences and findings of five of those teachers, all of whom were bilingual educators. The paper itself is an example of emerging action research.

As they moved from their customary roles as classroom teachers to novel roles as classroom action researchers, each participant produced his or her own action research project. The classroom teachers' projects became their "theses". My own project has become this document. As the sixth teacher involved in this research enterprise, I am confident that this study can present useful information regarding the growing practice of action research in the field of TESOL teacher education.

The current paper is really an "in progress" study. It is influenced by calls made by TESOL teacher educators (Freeman, 1996a; Freeman, 1996c; Van Lier, 1988) for new insights into language teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, and it belongs to a movement in language teacher education described by Richards (1998, p. xiv) as being away from a skill-based training perspective toward "a more holistic approach to teacher development, built on the notion of the teacher as *critical and reflective thinker.*" The study, by describing and analyzing the research experiences of a cohort of teachers in their last semester of graduate study, and by exploring implications of their action research projects for TESOL teacher education in urban settings, attempts to implement the holistic approach to second language teacher education, and to burnish

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the image of bilingual educators and TESOL teachers as what Schon (1983) refers to as reflective practitioners.

"The Project"

In October 1996, the Bilingual Education Program of the Department of Education at the City College of New York, in collaboration with the Division of Bilingual Education of the New York City Public Schools, was awarded a five-year Teachers and Personnel grant by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs of the U.S. Department of Education to establish The Second Language Learning Master Teacher Development Project. "The Project", as it has come to be called, is an innovative professional development initiative for teachers who are either teaching, or preparing to teach, Limited English Proficient (LEP) children in the metropolitan New York City area. The unique goal of the Project was to provide New York City public school teachers with the skills and experiences necessary for them to successfully work with both heterogeneous (ESL) and homogeneous (Bilingual Education) groupings of LEP children at the elementary and secondary levels. Two objectives of the grant were to institutionalize the Project in the form of a State-approved Masters program (achieved in 1997) and to initiate several curricular reforms (still in the process of implementation).

Another important objective of the Project has been the development of participants' "voices."[1] In the Project, teachers' voices are being heard in a variety of venues: in a student-directed leadership seminar, in regular journal-writing assignments in numerous courses, in workshops designed by participants for other teachers, and in a newly designed research sequence. This study focuses on the products and experiences of the teacher/learners as they finish that sequence, and as they develop what Winter (1998) calls the "authentic voice" of action researchers.

Action Research

[1]For more information about this increasingly valued aspect of teachers' education, see (Cohen, 1988; Eisner, 1998; Elbaz, 1991) in general education, and (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Fradd & Lee, 1997; Nunan, 1996), in TESOL teacher education.

Action research is a methodology which, although not uncontroversial among TESOL educators (see Nunan, 1994), has been used by researchers and teacher educators in the field of general education since the 1950's. Numerous arguments have been made in support of the action research method. Corey (1953, p. viii), who defined action research as "research that is undertaken by educational practitioners because they believe that by so doing they can make better decisions and engage in better actions", saw the action research process as a means of extending democratic values in education. Hustler, Cassidy, and Cuff (1986) concluded that action research provides a means for teachers to overcome their "unhappiness" with the irrelevance of traditional forms of educational research to the predicaments of teachers and schools. Elliott (1991), holding that the aim of action research is "to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge" (p. 49), found that collaborative forms of action research are "a creative response" to the increasing attempts to control teachers' practices (p. 56). Gabel (1994) suggested that action research provides "empowerment" to all of the participants in the research process, and noted that the tradition of action research is based upon the integration of theory and practice in education (paragraph 13). Most recently, Feldman (1998) noted the positive effects that action research (which he defines as a collaborative form of "enhanced normal practice") can have on both the teachers engaged in research projects and on the individuals and institutions which collaborate with them, leading to the development of "communities of practice".

Although the tradition of action research is less developed in TESOL teacher education than it is in the general education field, TESOL teacher educators have begun, in the past decade, to discuss the method. Freeman (1993) wrote about the viability of action research as a means of introducing moral values into TESOL classroom research. K. Richards (1994) saw action research as a means of promoting inclusion of TESOL teachers' perspectives on teaching and learning in the corpus of second language teaching research. Even Jack Richards (1998), who tended to subordinate action research to other forms of classroom investigation, recognized the value of small-scale action research projects as a means of developing teachers' classroom-based research skills.

Nevertheless, the actual practice of action research in TESOL teacher education has yet to be systematically explored, and descriptions of current action research programs are uncommon. One example is Nunan's (1990) description of a professional development program in Australia which focused primarily on collaborative methods for developing action research proposals. Another example is Thorne and Wang's (1996) description of the operation of an action research sequence within a two-year, pre-service teaching project in Beijing. However, despite the rarity of descriptive evidence of action research in practice, Wallace (1998) has recently produced the first textbook dedicated solely to the use of action research in the field of language teacher education.

The Model for Student Research

The five research projects reported upon in this report came about through the adaptation of Wallace's model for action research to a unique setting. The following subsections first describe the theoretical influences on teachers' research design. Then, the course sequence, in which adaptations were made to Wallace's model, is discussed. Finally, the structure of this report (which frames the work of the five bilingual teachers) is described.

The Reflective Cycle

Wallace bases his approach to action research upon his model of "the reflective cycle" in teacher development (Figure 2).The model stresses a recurrent process of action and reflection in the experiences of classroom teachers. Teachers reflect upon classroom events, then investigate them further via an action research project. During the course of data collection and analysis, teachers develop greater awareness of classroom events and processes, and of learner problems and concerns. Acting upon their increased awareness, teachers plan and implement curricular or pedagogical change. Analysis of these classroom interventions prompts teachers to develop new hypotheses about learning and interaction, which require further investigation. According to Wallace, this ongoing process leads to professional growth and development.

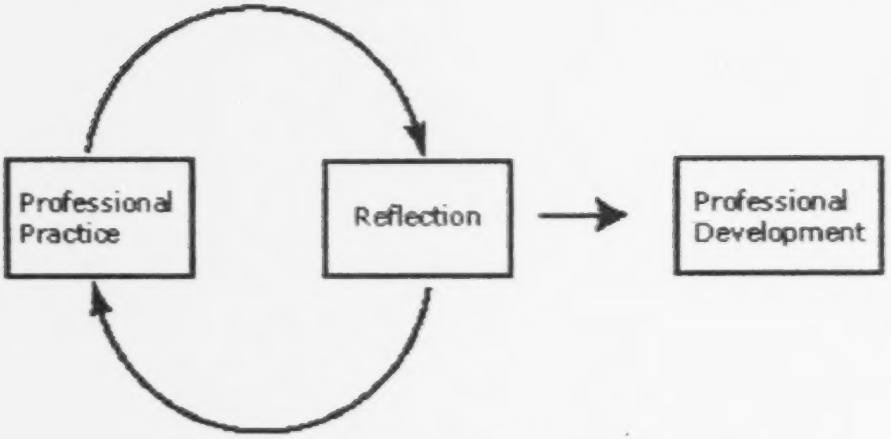

Figure 1. The Reflective Cycle adapted from Wallace (1998, p. 13)

The Project sought to increase teacher reflection and their involvement in classroom processes, and so Wallace's model of the reflective cycle became the initial basis for the action research investigations conducted by participants in the Project. However, although a detailed model for the conduct of action research exists in Wallace's textbook in graphic form, students found it to be confusing. Furthermore, Wallace presents various methods of data collection, but virtually ignores means of data analysis. His four-step research process was unwieldy in the two-semester research sequence, whose goal was to foster student reflection, but also to furnish document that were acceptable to a traditionally-oriented Education department. As a curricular innovation, the cyclical model did not meet the expectations of some faculty members and, interestingly, of students, regarding what a Masters research project should entail. A detailed description of the action research model as it developed at City College is compared with the Wallace model in an appendix to the present paper.

The Research Courses

Prior to initiation of the Project at City College, graduate students in Education all followed a two-course research sequence. Implementation of these courses varied between programs and within them. Emphasis was on traditional approaches to educational research--including both quantitative and qualitative approaches--but not upon action research. Since Wallace's model for

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action was inadequate to students' needs and unwieldy in the setting in which they were engaged, students and I produced, over a span of eight months, a ten-step research sequence in which the action extended beyond the scope of the course, and of teachers' participation in the Project . Students followed these steps in three phases:

Phase One:

In the first semester, students explored models of action research via textbook study and review of original action research projects. After less than a month of weekly meetings, they selected research topics, discussed them with classmates, developed an annotated bibliography of related readings, and submitted a topic outline to their faculty supervisor. Throughout the semester, they engaged in cooperative development of a structure for the research proposal via classroom discussion. Finally, they completed a detailed (10-12 page) research proposal under the supervision of the seminar leader. All of the participants successfully completed each stage of this process.

A unique aspect of the action research projects' design was the inclusion of autobiographical information in a separate section in all projects. Participants, as they struggled to match their own reading of exemplary action research projects with the readings which they had reported on in this and other courses, were confused by the voice emanating from the readings. They were also having trouble finding their own voices as writers. Classroom exercises in descriptive writing, a participant observation exercise in local supermarkets, and journal writing had allowed them to enjoy writing to some degree, but they were having difficulty in translating the these experiences to what was a more daunting task: writing a research proposal. One solution which I proposed and they accepted was to ground their research in their own experiences, making the writing more personally meaningful to themselves and to potential readers. What better way to do that than to include autobiographical material, I reasoned. Participants accepted my challenge and were universally successful in presenting their own interests and experiences as background information for their research projects. For most students, starting with autobiography led to a

more fluid writing process as they composed other sections of their proposals. For some, however, this technique did not entirely facilitate the larger writing experience.

Phase Two

In the second semester, participants worked independently on their action research projects, meeting occasionally with me to discuss their progress. In order to minimize my "gatekeeper" role as seminar leader, and to facilitate the action researchers' sense of independent inquiry, the group used Knowles' system of adult learning contracts (Knowles, 1986) to establish individual goals for completion, publication, and review of each project. During this period they collected and analyzed data, discussed their findings and interpretations of them with me, devised a plan for action on their findings, and submitted a final project in a form which was suitable for publication. By consensus, they decided to employ a bookshelf in the Bilingual Education/TESOL program office as an action research resource center, and in which each year's projects could be archived, for use by other graduate students in later years.

Phase Three

This was the action phase of participants' projects, occurring after participants graduated from the Project, and returned to their classrooms with greater insights and with out academic demands on their time. At the time of writing, this phase was being implemented in schools in three boroughs of New York City.

My Study

This study arose from the need to condense and disseminate the work of the cohort of action researchers in a manner that was comprehensible in academic and non-academic circles. It was also motivated by my own interest in fostering significant change in the academic institutions with which I am currently affiliated. Although there was one member of the cohort who was not bilingual, the study focuses on bilingual educators learning to be TESOL teachers, since this growing population of in-service teachers is not adequately represented in the academic literature. Since all of the bilingual teachers involved in the action research sequence had not completed their

research by the time of publication, a representative sample of five projects was selected for this paper.

Action Research About Action Research

Elliott (1991, p. 13) refers to action research studies which report upon the findings of other action research investigations as part of a "second-order process"(1991, p. 13) of educational research. This is the case with the current study. As did the participants, I played two roles: I was both a researcher and a teacher. My goals were to improve both my own practice as a teacher of teachers, to provide information which might be useful to others in developing their own skills and knowledge in the field of TESOL teacher education, and to respond, as an administrator, more intelligently and empathetically to the concerns of the teacher/learners with whom I have been working for four years. My research process was recursive: as participants provided me with feedback and criticism over the one-year course sequence, I revised both the methods of presenting the course and my own goals in teaching it. I began a process which will be continued next year when I repeat the action sequence with a new cohort of teacher/learners. Although I played the role of researcher before, during, and after data collection and analysis, my main interest was to enable the teachers with whom I worked to operationalize the knowledge which they were acquiring as graduate students. My secondary interest was to provide myself and my colleagues with information that would be useful to them in continuing the process of curriculum reform at the Project, and in other locations.

The Research Question

In an attempt to broaden my investigation into the experiences of bilingual second language teachers as they completed action research projects, I asked the following research question :

> What was the nature of the experiences of bilingual teachers performing action research for the first time in a graduate TESOL program?

This question was then divided into three sub questions, which were:

- What topics did bilingual public school teachers choose, what were their motivations for choosing them, and what findings did they produce, when completing their action research projects?
- What courses of action did they propose for working with English Language Learners upon completion of their research?
- What problems and successes did they encounter during the implementation of their research?

I assumed that answers to these questions would aid me in my own inquiry into means of understanding the needs of the teachers with whom I was working. I intended to act upon my understanding by continuing a process of programmatic, pedagogical, and curricular re-design at the City College, in anticipation of making the Project more attractive and useful to in service teachers. This paper attempts to present the answers to these research questions by highlighting the participants' perspectives toward their own research, and drawing upon these perspectives to portray--in what I hope is a fluid, painterly manner--their successes and failures as they engaged for the first time in the process of action research.

Participants in the Study

The study was conducted with five members of the second cohort of teacher/learners enrolled in the Project.[2] Two teachers were born in the Caribbean, and the rest were born in the United States. All are fluent in two languages, with three being linguistically dominant in English and two being Spanish-dominant bilinguals. Four of the five participants were women.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

[2]Fifty-nine in-service teachers, in five cohorts, have participated in the Project since 1996. Project participants have come from a variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Although native languages represented among participants have included English, Mandingo, Korean, Mandarin, Haitian and Jamaican Creole, and French, the majority of teachers enrolled in the Project have been native speakers of Spanish. Nearly all of the Spanish speakers use the Caribbean variety of that language.

Data was collected during and after participants' last two semesters of graduate study. Most of the data consisted of artifacts, such as student final projects and research journals collected at the end of the second semester. I collected additional data during both semesters by recording participant observation field notes. At the conclusion of the second semester, I also conducted open-ended interviews with selected participants and recorded the interviews in the form of field notes and typed transcriptions.

During the first stage of data analysis, I examined artifacts on a case by case basis, using a content analysis approach. Then, using a modified form of cross-case analysis (with individuals representing cases), I recorded recurrent patterns in each case, and compared them with other cases in the five-case sample. This step of analysis was facilitated by use of a graphic organizer--a grid which included categories such as , "autobiography", "successes", "problems", etc.

In the second stage of analysis, I compared my findings with information contained in one key participant' journals and interviews, in an attempt to return the research voice of this paper to the teachers who generated the data in the first place. Finally, before publication, I conferred with all of the participants by telephone, and checked my findings with them, in order to avoid what Freeman (1996b) has described as attacks on participants' veracity in traditional research.

My Findings

Findings from my second-order action research study focus on participant activities and discoveries, and are presented here in two subsections. In the first, salient features of all participants' projects are presented and discussed. The second subsection is devoted to an ethnographically-influenced examination of the research stories of one of the participants.

General Information from Five Projects

Since the action research projects were conducted in classroom settings of teachers working in classrooms ranging from bilingual Kindergarten to fifth grade ESL, the activities and experiences of participants varied. Their general findings are reported in the following table.

Table 1

General Structure of Five Action Research Projects

Author/Topic/ Population	Auto-biography*	Motivation*	Findings*	Action Proposed*	Problem(s)+	Success(es)+
Marisa/ Effects on writing style in English of bilingual student when exposed to discussion around literature/ bilingual (Span./Engl.) 4th grade	migrant experience; professional experience; early experience in writing; parental experience	empathy with learners; response to standardized testing	incorporation and modification of target structures for personal purposes; value of home writing	development and expansion of writing workshops (including in content areas) as a means of passing standardized examinations	data reduction; scheduling of project; keeping focused	connecting theory with children's experiences
Zoe/ ESL, grades 1-5/ Code-switching and biliteracy in a bilingual child	migrant experience; professional experience	empathy; professional curiosity	researcher and participants' "parallel lives"; teacher influence not a factor in code switching, but environmental factors and biliteracy are	additional pull-outs for non literate students; more collaborative work with Dual Language teachers	data reduction; time for transcription	"reality" based inquiry into her own classroom
Alma/ Journal writing in Kindergarten and 1st grade/bilingual (Span./ Engl.) 1st grade	professional experience	professional curiosity about student abilities at a new grade level	participants showed variable improvement in mechanical skills, possibly related to prior schooling	using tutorials to improve skills of low achievers	organization and composition of final report	discovering the value for young writers of a method she'd used successfully with older children
Joanna/ Acculturation: a possible cause for students' varying attitudes toward ESL/ bilingual (Span./ Engl.) Kindergarten	immigrant experience	professional curiosity about student motivation; classroom problem solving	family more important than culture in determining children's attitudes toward language	present lessons and activities related to family in native country and USA	organization and composition of final report	greater intimacy with students
Luis/ Student perceptions of "cluster" teachers/ combined bilingual (Span./Engl.) 5th/6th grade	immigrant experience ; professional experience	empathy with learners; identification of a structural problem in school setting	perceptions of cluster teachers were negative, and varied by gender	develop team approach; model respect for teachers verbally and by action	time; data reduction and analysis; composition of report; lack of polemical "voice"	empathy with colleagues; changed perspective

Note: Data sources are as follows: * = action research paper, + = journals and interviews.

Topic, Autobiography, and Motivation

In Table 1, each researcher's topic accompanies his or her name in the first column. Topics, which were chosen early in the first semester and later revised (depending on the researchers' changing interests or job situations), spanned areas of interest ranging from acculturation, a concern of many second language teachers world-wide, to students' perceptions of "cluster" teachers, a topic of interest, presumably, to a very limited population of educators in New York City. What prompted the researchers to make the choices of topics which they did? One answer to this question can be found in teachers' own personal traits.

A distinctive feature of the action research project design was the inclusion of autobiographical data in each report. In the first semester, teachers wrote briefly about themselves in their research proposals. In the second semester, they added additional material to their final reports, by commenting on what experience or objective had motivated them to choose their research topic. This device enables writers to personalize their research, and readers to have a clear sense of why each researcher chose a particular topic to investigate. It also enabled me to investigate their motivation for studying their classroom population in an unobtrusive way.

A personal trait which motivated teachers to select a particular research topic was empathy with the subjects of their studies. Three of five participants reported empathetic motivation for their studies. Marisa, for example, reflecting a migrant's experience in biliteracy, chose to investigate children's writing. Zoe, reminded of her own experience as a migrant English-speaking child in a Spanish-speaking school in Florida, saw similarities between her life and her students' lives. Her sense of empathy was deepened by her research experience, as she saw what she refers to as "parallel lives" between herself and her research participant.

The prominence of empathy in this group of teachers' motivation for conducting classroom-based inquiry is not surprising. Empathy as a major factor in Project participants' behavior, and has been documented in an earlier study (Walsh, 1998). Their empathetic approach to classroom research appears to result from this group of migrant and immigrant teachers' application of life experiences to their professional lives--something that Connelly and Clandinin

(1995) have observed in teachers in general education, and a possible factor in what Golombek refers to as teachers' moral and affective way of knowing. (1998)

Professional curiosity was a second internal motivating factor affecting participant research. Alma, for example, had recently changed grade levels in elementary school teaching. She had used journal writing successfully in the middle grades, but she was curious to discover if journals could be effective in developing the skills of bilingual writers in the beginning elementary grades. Joanna, a Puerto Rican, was curious to know if acculturation was affecting the attitudes of young Dominican children toward their developing second language. However, personal traits of empathy or professional curiosity were not the only factors which motivated teachers to choose a particular topic. An important external factor also helped to shape some participants' choices.

I have chosen to refer to this external motivating factor in topic selection as "institutional structure", and it may be related to participants' experiences in the Project. The action researchers had all participated in a monthly leadership seminar in which they had exchanged lesson plans and teaching ideas, investigated professional concerns such as certification, and made suggestions for change in the direction and administration of the Project itself. Four of the participants attended a politically-charged hearing sponsored by the State Education Department regarding possible elimination of certification in TESOL. All had participated in a letter writing campaign which addressed that topic. It is not surprising, then, that with an increased awareness of institutional influence on the second language classroom, some participants chose to engage in research investigating possibilities for institutional change. Marisa, for example, was curious to understand how she, as a teacher, could respond more effectively to the introduction of a district-wide reading test in her bilingual classroom. With experience both as a "cluster" teacher (the term used in New York City to describe specialists who present content-area instruction to children during their regular teacher's preparation period) and as a bilingual classroom teacher, Luis wanted to understand how the use of "cluster" teachers affected or was affected by children's attitudes toward adults.

There also is an apparent relationship between empathy and institutional change in teachers' motivation to choose a particular research topic. Of the three teachers whose motivation included empathy, two also were motivated by "institutional structure." Marisa responded to the state-wide structure of standardized tests, while Luis responded to the local structure of using specialists for mandated teacher classroom coverage. Interestingly, Zoe, who was not motivated by instructional structure, but was by empathy, chose an institutional action for change (redefining the content of content of pull-out ESL instruction in her school) as a response to her research. This correlation between personal empathy and response to institutional structure is one finding of my "second-order" study that should prompt additional study. However, the bilingual teachers' own findings, and the actions they proposed in response to them, will be the focus of the next sub section of this paper.

Bilingual Teachers' Findings and Proposed Actions

Predictably, findings by the researchers varied extensively, as did their topics and motivation. In addition, all of the researchers made discoveries that led them to suggest modifications to their approach to the classroom, rather than to reinforce preconceptions about their students and their formal learning environment. At the time of writing of this paper, researchers were implementing the pedagogical or policy actions that they proposed in response to their findings. Marisa found that a child with only seven months of experience in the country could perform complicated reading and writing tasks, and would receive significant home support for her writing. She decided to expand her literature reading and writing workshop program. Zoe found that, contrary to her expectations, teacher influence was not a major factor in children's code-switching behavior in her school, but level of biliteracy was more influential on a child's second language acquisition than she had anticipated. She is implementing structural changes in her daily routine in response to her findings. Alma found that very young immigrant children can successfully use writing journals--something that she had not considered previously--and she is expanding her journal writing program in Kindergarten and first grade. Joanna, to her surprise, discovered that family experiences and attitudes played a much more important role in affecting

Kindergartners' attitudes toward a second language than cultural factors. She is incorporating more family-related exercises into her ESL lessons. Luis found that children's perceptions of their teachers varied by gender, with boys having more positive views toward both their regular and cluster teacher. He is disseminating his findings to peers and supervisors, in the hope of changing the status of cluster teachers in his school.

Problems and Successes

All of the participants encountered significant problems in completing their projects. For the most part, these problems were in response to the amount of time and intellectual effort required in preparing a report. Some researchers, burdened preconceptions of their projects as "theses"--a concept borrowed from peers in other programs at the College--had difficulty organizing and writing their reports. This was particularly true for Luis and Alma, but it is important to note that all of the researchers were working full-time in classrooms with an average of twenty-eight children, and with additional family-generated demands on their time. Interestingly, only two of the five participants (Joanna and Zoe) reported that they had foreseen this problem, and developed strategies to prevent a "rush toward deadline" at the end of the project.

Data reduction was also a problem for most of the participants. Like the problem with time, this problem appears to derive from a preconception of what "good research" should be, rather than with what it could be. Alma, Joanna, and Zoe, for example, were surprised to discover in conferences with me that their initial choice of sample size was too large, and that a smaller sample would adequately enable them to adequately analyze their findings in a limited amount of time, and to bring about change in their classrooms.

Although Luis had completed a penultimate draft of his research paper at the time of writing of this document, he had encountered a dilemma which caused him to be dissatisfied with the whole research experience. Aside from the problems mentioned above, Luis also did not feel that his inquiry enabled him to make the polemical statements about teachers' working conditions that he had hoped to make when he entered into the research enterprise. He phrased his concern this way:

> It wasn't what I expected a thesis to be. I thought it was going to be more theoretical....I found myself explaining what was happening--doing something active in the future, rather than explaining where I want to go.

Luis uses the term "thesis" to describe his report. In both semesters of the research course, he struggled, first with understanding the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches, and then with data analysis methods. He felt that having to report from the data, rather than from his own opinions, constricted him, and limited the personal usefulness of his final report. Unfortunately, Luis' dissatisfaction emerged after his study was essentially complete. He did not keep a journal regularly, and his journal reports were mostly descriptive, without insights into what he thought the task of his research really was, or if he agreed with it. He was also severely distracted from the research task by health and professional concerns (Luis has a heart condition, and he changed to a more demanding job in September). Sadly, it seems that Luis' voice is not as resonant in his research as it had been in class, or as it might have been in his paper. [3]

Yet Luis, like the other researchers, did report success due to his research endeavor. In an interview, he commented that "It made me think of what cluster teachers do. What a loss!" This expression of empathy for his colleagues was, quite possibly, a major finding for Luis, but he did not see it as such. Instead, he concentrated on the variables that had emerged from his survey and interviews of bilingual children as the stated findings of his study.

Zoe, on the other hand, when asked to cite the positive factors in her research experience, felt that her interviews with a child brought her own academic experiences closer to classroom "reality", and made them more meaningful to her. Marisa also appreciated the opportunity to apply theory learned in the university classroom to her classroom practice. Alma was pleased to see that the experience which she'd gained in a different classroom setting was transferable to her current one. Joanna noted that her efforts to interview children and analyze their drawings brought her closer in feeling to her students. For her, empathy was an outcome of, not a motivation for, her study.

One Action Researchers' Story

[3] Luis' report was undergoing a final revision at the time of writing of this paper. Hopefully, his voice will be clearer in his final report.

Since the purpose of my "second-order" study was to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of the researchers and the processes which they developed as they conducted and implemented their research, I chose to use procedures described by Fetterman (1989) to select a "key informant" from the sample of five action researchers. This participant's experiences are presented and examined in this section, using methods of enriched description and extensive quotation which are often found in ethnographic research studies.

Marisa and Her Study

Marisa, a mother of three children (one of whom is herself a New York City teacher), was born in New York City, but moved to Puerto Rico at the age of four, returning to the United States when she was eight years old. She attended public schools in New York, and was married early. When she was divorced she returned to education, working as a paraprofessional in an elementary classroom for seven years. She attended a college of the City University of New York on a part-time basis, and graduated with a degree in psychology. For the past four years, she has been a fourth grade bilingual teacher in Brooklyn.

Marisa's early experiences with literacy were distinctive. Her mother, by claiming to be able to read Marisa's childish "scribbles" in Spanish, encouraged her to view herself as a writer. This self-concept proved useful to her when she returned to New York. In an interview, she says

> I: I thought I was a great writer, before I even entered school, because I was writing letters to a friend, and my mother was able to read them. And then I thought that, because of the language [in her English-only classes in New York], that I had forgotten Spanish, and how I was just learning how to write in English.
> T: But that wasn't the case?
> I: Well, obviously [my mother] could help us in writing the letters, but all my scribbles were encouraged. No one said, "Oh, you don't know how to write," so it didn't occur to me. There was nothing to it, I believed. So at age eight [when she was in the United States, struggling with writing in English], I still believed that I was able to write, and I just forgot... I had to write in English, and I had forgotten how to do it in Spanish. So there was no question in my mind that I did know it sometime, in the past.

Having had a very positive experience as a writer at home, she still had to re-learn literacy skills in a second language. Yet her early experiences had a profound effect upon her, coloring her attitudes toward her own students' experiences as immigrants and as New York City public school students.

In addition to her own lifelong interest in her own writing, Marisa works in her fourth grade classroom to create what she calls a "community of writers." It is not surprising, therefore, that she chose to conduct a case study of the effects of classroom discussion about literature on the writing style of a recently-arrived immigrant girl in her classroom. What's more, her classroom, like all fourth grade classrooms in New York State, is an arena for the imposition of standardized reading and writing tests. Marisa writes about the motivation for her study, noting that

> I have found that fourth grade bilingual students who take the English Language Exam usually are unable to pass the writing component of the exam. These bilingual fourth grade students are compared to their monolingual counterparts and are expected to perform equally well. I find this to be a disadvantage since my students have always been in a bilingual classroom where the bulk of their education has been in Spanish. I have been trying to find a way to prepare the students for this test and most importantly for the writing component.

Marisa responds to the increased local emphasis on standardized testing with a piece of action research. Later, she embeds her rationale for conducting research in a classroom narrative (a practice which Clandinin (1993) and Clandinin and Connelly (1998) have described in the field of general education). She writes that

> one day ... as part of a writing activity I asked the class to create their own story. To my surprise I noticed that some of the students had adopted the writing style of a few of the stories and authors we had read. Parts of their writing sounded as if taken out of a book. Still I knew the stories to be their own. This happened during the spring term. At the time I was searching for a topic for my action research and decided to do it on what I had observed about my students.

In both cases, Marisa acts not only as a professional teacher and researcher, but as an empathetic co-participant in the daily classroom routine. When Marisa writes in her research journal , "As we get to know each other better, I'll ask them to write more English" (emphasis my own), she clearly expresses her empathetic relationship with her students. Empathy as a motivator influences Marisa's pedagogical decisions (such as focusing on "memoir" writing rather than test preparation drills) and her choice of a research topic, one which may document the effectiveness of progressive classroom instructional techniques in a school system increasingly dedicated to "teaching to the test."

Nevertheless, it is not easy for Marisa to find the time to conduct her research, and

she worries in her journal over the effect that it will have on her school responsibilities:

> Most of the work I have the students do is in their notebooks. For the research I have the students writing in their journal. There's very little work I have for display if any at all.

Display of student work on the bulletin board outside her room is required, not as a means for celebrating student accomplishment, but as a reference point by which district administrators and State inspectors may gauge the progress of the school toward meeting administrative goals. Marisa must write--verbatim--the State learning standard which each and every piece of displayed student work serves to illustrate. She notes in her research paper that time for research has been increasingly co-opted by requirements passed down by administrative authorities. She must administer a forty-minute assessment test individually to each child, limiting time for instruction, and creating discipline problems with children who are not being assessed. Preparation time is also being limited by the implementation of standardized routines. For example, a "flow of the day" chart, listing events for the day in detail, must be prepared and posted, daily.

The impositions on Marisa's time caused her to reassess her research method, and to change the size of her sample from four children to one. Yet Marisa was able to complete her research, and report successfully upon it, incorporating a critique of administratively-imposed "outside factors" in her final report. She writes that

> there have been several outside factors, which have had an impact on how I was able to perform my action research. There were many times when the writing workshop [in which Marisa intended to gather data] was not able to take place. When it did it was never for the amount of time I had originally designed. During the time the students were writing instead of having conferences with the students I was busy trying to comply with requirements the administration asked of us. There were very few conferences. Some of the outside factors were unforeseen and unavoidable.

In Marisa's report, empathy is also a lens through which she sees the results of her investigation. After documenting an increasing complexity in the use of borrowed "literary" phrases in the writing of Danielle (the key informant in her case study), and referring to instances of "interference" in one writing sample, she remarks upon the development of Danielle's "voice" as a writer. Next, Marisa analyzes a "heartwarming" piece of writing which Danielle created at home.

She notes that the level of borrowing in this story caused her to ask Danielle to define "plagiarism". She reports:

> I asked her if she knew what the word plagiarism meant. After I explained what it meant I asked her if she thought she was plagiarizing. She said she didn't do that because she was using the words to tell her own story, which came from her head. The only way she thought it would be plagiarism was if it had the same characters, plot and events. I must admit that I agree with her statement. There are many times when we as adults repeat phrases or sentences from a song, poem or even a literary piece and do not consider it to be plagiarism. We use it to express our own ideas and feelings. (emphasis mine)

Marisa, aware of her responsibilities as a teacher, but interested in Danielle's reasons for writing as she has done, first inquires, then listens carefully to the child's response. She values Danielle's analysis of her own behavior, and agrees with it. Then, changing her own writer's voice, Marisa again uses a pronoun to bring her analysis home to her readers. In the fourth line of the quoted passage, she notes that "we" use the same forms of borrowing that children use. In this passage of her writing, Marisa directs us, her adult readers, to the valuable insights of a child. She tells us to see, as she does, parallels between our own adult behavior and the behavior of children--an act that another, less empathetic researcher would probably avoid.

In her conclusion, Marisa describes what the meaning of her research has been for her. She focuses on "story", "voice", and meaning, writing that

> Through this action research I have found that in a classroom where students have the opportunity to listen, read and discuss stories everyday, as well as practice writing, they ultimately improve their writing skills as they write their own stories. Through the use of literature students receive the inspiration and instruction they need to become effective writers. The students begin to develop a sense of style as well as a voice with which to make their writing meaningful.

Marisa values a process approach to literacy development. She sees her instructional approach as a way of providing students with motivation to become better writers. Because she is listening to their stories, she believes that their voices can, and will, be heard. In Marisa's class, writing is a means for students to personalize language and "make it their own," and to move beyond being language students to becoming successful "language users".

In the final paragraphs of her report, Marisa describes the actions which she hopes to take during the remainder of the school year. Aware of the successful use of fiction in her classroom,

she hopes to expand her efforts to include content area instruction. Her first project will to be to incorporate scientific nonfiction in student writing projects, to use written texts as vocabulary builders and to use personalized writing exercises as meaning enhancers. She feels strongly that this is the appropriate way to address issues raised by state and local authorities, writing, "If this type of writing workshop becomes successful, then I'm sure my students will have a chance at passing the English Language Arts Exam." They will do so, one hopes, with resolve and success, due to Marisa's efforts to stress meaning in language learning, and authorship in second language writing.

Recommendations for Change and Conclusion

The general experiences of five in-service teachers, and the particular experiences of one of them, have been presented descriptively in this paper, much as a photographic image records, in a suggestive way, the form of distant celestial objects. It is not a complete image; the sharpest picture of the participants' work is found in the studies themselves. Nevertheless, analysis of the image which this paper puts forth of participants' interests, concerns, and discoveries has prompted me to make several recommendations for change. Three general recommendations are as follows:

1. Identify and explore affective factors such as empathy in TESOL teachers' experiences that can link research to practice.

Empathy was one affective factor that was identified in this paper as a motivator for bilingual teachers' own action research endeavors, and an outcome of conducting action research. What role this trait play in the action research of teachers who do not have immigrant or migrant experiences themselves? Are there different types or levels of empathy? How does empathy relate to teachers' interpretations of classroom events and their willingness to reflect upon them? Questions such as these need to be answered, but from the emic perspective that first and second order action research studies provide for authors and to readers. In answering these questions, others will certainly arise, new

affective factors will emerge, and an affectively cognizant, teacher-friendly research agenda in TESOL teacher education can be designed. However, these affective factors will not come to the front if research does not provide a forum for expression of teachers' histories, interests and concerns, such as the autobiographical sections of the bilingual teachers' research reports did. In short, any research which attempts to understand the lives of teachers must allow their voices to be heard clearly.

2. Advocate for greater inclusion of teachers' voices in educational research.

Freeman (1996a; 1998) has called for more educational research in TESOL which gives a voice to teachers' classroom concerns. Concerned with issues of scientific validity, many classroom researchers have attempted to approach a unique problem (the events in language classrooms related to the informational needs of practicing teachers) with methodologies[4] which respond to questions of interest to researchers but of limited value to teachers. Furthermore, the applicability of their findings to the urban public school settings in which many ESL teachers work are of limited value. On the other hand, the action research approach which these five teachers have taken is inviting to colleagues, being eminently readable, and is focused upon concerns similar to their own. Furthermore, it is written in a voice often unfamiliar to them, suggesting to teachers that personal research can be a valid means of understanding one's own classroom, and of acting to improve conditions within it. This is a form of "professional validity" that has been ignored in the past. According to Bell (1997), the neglect of teachers' voices continues, and may be related to publishers' and others' negative perceptions of classroom-based research methodology. Whatever the cause, it is imperative that TESOL teacher educators and the various organs that claim to represent their interests understand the need to focus greater resources on classroom research in general, and upon action research in particular. How, though, can TESOL teachers themselves become more aware of the value of action research to their professional, personal, and intellectual lives?

[4] See Chaudron (1988) for an extensive list of classroom-based research studies that do not use an action research approach.

3. Raise awareness of action research among TESOL teachers.

One way of raising TESOL teachers' awareness of action research as a means of investigating their own classroom concerns would be to disseminate the findings of teachers' action research projects on local, national, and international levels. At the City College, steps have been taken to archive teachers' action research projects in the Bilingual Education/TESOL office, for use as references by action researchers in coming years. Discussions have been proposed with New York City Board of Education administrators which may lead to inclusion of teachers' action research projects on a B.O.E. web site. Inclusion of action research projects in international journals such as the TESOL Quarterly would be a welcome addition to the literature of TESOL and of TESOL teacher education. Inclusion of action researchers on the steering committees of research interest sections in TESOL and other organizations should be promoted, and the newly-created TESOL International Research Foundation must actively promote action research in coming years. All of these actions will add visibility to action research in the field, and they can begin a movement among TESOL professionals (as Glesne (1991) recommends to mainstream teacher educators) to "de-mystify the word 'research'" in the minds of TESOL practitioners.

If implemented, the above recommendations can also enable teacher educators to move beyond the traditional repetition of inherited forms--what Winter (1998) refers to as the "transmission" model of teacher education, and add a bi-directional, communicative element to professional development. A continued movement toward inclusion of action research at all levels of professional endeavor should make it possible for TESOL teachers to experience learning that is based upon reflection and insight. In turn, this may lead to a process of "dialectical analysis", in which teachers investigate conflicts and tensions in classroom data, and apply them to historical and social contexts beyond the level of the individual classroom. But such a movement will have to begin locally.

On a local level, certain recommendations have also emerged in this study. They are included here as specific guidelines for those who are interested in adapting the action research sequence used in the Project to their own situations. Specifically, the Project (and I as its Director) will perform the following tasks in the coming year:

- In planning research courses, focus on participant, rather than institutional, schedules. The administrative requirements of the university, as represented by the Spring-Fall semester class schedule, clearly limited the continuity of several projects, causing unnecessary confusion and stress among participants. For two teachers, this meant that research proposals were designed for one classroom population, but implemented with another.
- Provide teachers with examples of action research in parallel course offerings. The first semester of the research sequence was the first experience that teachers had with action research, in spite of their having completed two and a half years of Bilingual Education and TESOL graduate study. Teachers' cognitive models regarding what constitutes "good" research were limited, with several teachers entering the research endeavor with a quantitative vision of educational research which conflicted with the qualitative emphasis of action research. Examples of action research studies for use in other areas (such as methods and theory courses) should be archived and distributed to instructors and students to familiarize them with the action research approach prior to enrollment in the action research sequence.
- Emphasize self-analysis and data analysis concurrently, throughout the research sequence. Although a reflective approach to the research process was stressed in the first semester via classroom activities and assignments (e.g., in-class writing tasks and journal assignments), in the second semester, more emphasis was given in class to preparing an academic product than to reflecting upon what was being prepared. Pressed by deadlines and deluged with data, teachers became confused, and neglected to record the progress of their thinking and question posing in their research journals. When faced with the task of summarizing their experiences and finding meaning in them in the form of a report, some became even more baffled. This state of confusion might be avoided by designing and implementing a pilot project in the first

semester, rather than by focusing on preparation of a research proposal. (Such a project would enable teachers such as Luis to clarify their voices early in the research process, and to amplify them in later stages). Furthermore, pilot projects would enable all researchers to explore analytical frameworks and data analysis methods more coherently in both semesters. The complete research cycle would thus be implemented throughout the research sequence, rather than being completed after graduation, as it is now.

All of the above recommendations will be followed in the action segment of my own action research over the next semesters. In fact, the process has begun already, as planning has started for next year's research course, and as the process of re-certification of the TESOL Masters program by the State Education Department has unfolded. Hopefully, my own efforts and those of like-minded colleagues in schools and universities will lead to a notable growth in the number of action research projects conducted at City College and elsewhere. Just as the topics of topics of classroom-based inquiries will vary from teacher to teacher, so will the clarity with which they reflect and report upon their findings. Nevertheless, taken together, their action research projects can and should glow brightly in the TESOL profession, as a body of work to be observed and pondered by neophytes and experienced educators alike. With the process of observation, reflection, and action in place, university and public school teachers can reform and revitalize TESOL teacher education. They can--they must--jointly produce research that is inclusive in voice, innovative in methodology, enlightening in its findings, and personally, socially and politically transformative in its effect.

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Appendix A: Two Models of Teacher Action Research Compared

Source Type Comments	Aim	Model	Method	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Researcher Role	Teacher Educator Role
Wallace (1998) / language teacher ed. / Since the focus is on individuals or small groups, generalizability is not a major consideration	to facilitate the reflective cycle, thereby providing a method for improving professional action by teachers	fixed; cyclical	**Four** Steps: 1. develop topic 2. gather data 3. analyze data 4. apply discoveries	take field notes; record data in journals; practice participant observation or non-participant observation; administer surveys; utilize think-alouds and other verbal reports;	pattern-matching	reflective practitioner	not mentioned
Walsh et. al. (2000) / TESOL/Bi-lingual ed. / Teacher knowledge of primary importance; collaboration in develop-ment of research design, independent conduct of project stressed	to understand practice, amplify content knowledge, develop carry-over skills	emer-gent; spiral	**Ten** Steps: **Semester One**: 1. discuss, revise prior models 2. choose topic 3. draft, revise project proposal **Semester Two** 1. collect data 2. analyze data 3. propose action 4. modify proposal 5. publish project **Phase Three**: act on project findings	collect written and pictorial artefacts; participant observation; interviewing; field notes; case study	coding; pattern matching and content analysis	reflective practitioner; collaborative designer; co-researcher	collabora-tor, mentor, co-researcher; "second-order" action researcher

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